

Remarks

The Office Action dated October 03, 2005, and made final, and the Advisory Action dated December 20, 2005 have been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendments have been made in consequence thereof. Specifically, claims 1-21 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1, 11, 16 and 20 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-21 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Pope et al. (WO 98/02942) ("Pope '942"). Claims 1-21 have also been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Pope et al. (USP 6,135,781) ("Pope '781"). Pope '781 is a continuation of US Patent Application No. 08/733,513 filed October 18, 1996. Pope '942 is a PCT Application of US Patent Application No. 08/733,513 filed October 18, 1996. As such, Pope '942 and Pope '781 are related. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons set forth hereafter. Additionally, the Advisory Action mentions that Doi et al. (USP 5,133,670) ("Doi") teaches an alignment member flexing the tails of contacts for planarity with respect to a printed circuit board. While none of the claims have specifically been rejected based on Doi, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over Doi for at least the reasons set forth below.

Pope '942 and Pope '781 each describe interconnection devices, such as a plug 16 and a socket 26, each having multiple connector channels 24 and rows of contact elements 12. The contact elements 12 are pre-formed and received within the connector channels 24. When loaded into the connector channels 24, a tail portion 80 of each contact element 12 is positioned along an external surface of the device 16, 26. The tail portions 80 of each contact are received in notches 84 to resist lateral movement of the contacts. A surface mount foot portion extends beyond the notch 84 and includes a step 88 and flat portion 89 for surface mounting. Notably, the surface mount foot portion extends beyond the edge of the external surface of the device 16.

Applicants respectfully submit that each of Pope '942 and Pope '781 fail to teach each and every element in the claims. For example, claim 1 recites, among other things, contacts that

engage an alignment rib at engagement areas such that the alignment rib is aligned with board contact points of the contacts; claim 11 recites, among other things, contact solder tails that are positioned between an alignment rib and a circuit board such that the alignment rib is aligned with board contact points of the contacts; claim 16 recites, among other things, orienting an alignment rib with a mounting surface of the circuit board such that contacts are positioned between the alignment rib and the mounting surface and the alignment rib is aligned with board contact points of the contacts; and claim 20 recites, among other things, a plurality of contacts positioned relative to a housing, such that a mounting portion of each of the contacts is positioned between an alignment rib of the housing and a circuit board. Each of Pope '942 and Pope '781 fail to teach aligning an alignment rib with a board contact point of the contacts to ensure coplanarity of the contacts. Rather, the solder tail portions of the Pope '942 and Pope '781 contacts extend beyond the edge of the external surface of Pope's device. Thus, neither Pope '942 nor Pope '781 include an alignment rib aligned with a board contact point of the contacts.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, independent claims 1, 11, 16 and 20 are submitted to be patentable over either Pope '942 or Pope '781. Claims 2-10 depend from independent claim 1; claims 12-15 depend from independent claim 11; claims 17-19 depend from independent claim 16; and claim 21 depends from independent claim 20. When the recitations of these dependent claims are considered in combination with the recitations of the independent claims, Applicants submit that the dependent claims likewise are patentable over either Pope '942 or Pope '781.

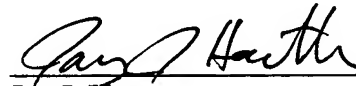
For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of claims 1-21 be withdrawn.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over Doi. Specifically, Doi fails to teach aligning an alignment rib with a board contact point of the contacts to ensure coplanarity of the contacts. Rather, Doi merely describes positioning an alignment member 13 within an opening recess 27 of a housing 11. Notably, Doi's alignment

member is not aligned with a board contact point of Doi's contacts 12. As such, claims 1-21 are patentable over Doi.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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